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ABSTRACT

The Fanon Center Model was created to test and implement specific community based organizational strategies which would enable students and localities to identify and solve their educational problems. This report begins by summarizing the model from its inception. Following sections describe the processes and actions that took place in making the model operational. Problems which relate to attempting to include parents, community members and school perscnnel, while focusing on the totality of childrens' educational experience, are explained. The final sections lend perspectives on the critical dimensions and implications of the sociocultural realities of the inner city in relation to this educational model. The hope is expressed that this report will provide insights and suggest alternatives for others interested in developing community based problem solving strategies in urban schools. (Author/AM)

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ED159250

THE FANON COMMUNITY-SCHOOL EDUCATION MODEL

(Formerly Urban Education Project)

Final Report

to

National Institute of Education

DHEW

July 1974 - June 1977

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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THE FANON CENTER COMMUNITY-SCHOOL EDUCATION MODEL

INTRODUCTION

This is a final report to the Program on Local Problem-Solving of the National Institute of Education for a grant awarded to the Fanon Research and Development Center, 1974-1977. The purpose of the award was to "learn whether implementation of specific organizational strategies by states and localities could increase their capacity to identify and solve the problems with which they were confronted in education, and if so, to assist state and localities in implementing those organizational strategies."

This final report from the Fanon Center describes what we are calling the Fanon Center Community-School Education Model. It is intended to serve multiple purposes. The document's most immediate purpose is to inform the educational community; it is also intended to draw upon the experiences of the past three years and to provide new insights and suggest some alternatives for others interested in developing community based problem-solving strategies in urban schools. We hope that this report will be useful and inform parents, teachers, school administrators and policy-makers as well.

Its style reflects an attempt to reach the diverse groups for whom this report is intended. We first begin by summarizing the model from its inception. This is followed by sections describing the processes and interactions that took place in operationalizing the model, with specific focus directed to problems encountered in implementing the model given the social reality of education in our schools and the nature of the society. The final sections lend perspectives on the critical dimensions and implications of the social reality which affects and determines whether the model can become a reality.

I. THE FANON CENTER MODEL

A. The Problem

The Fanon Center Model grows out of a particular specification of the problem in schools with regard to the child's learning. We assume that the educational community, i.e., the school and its surrounding community, is a microcosm of the larger society. It consists of a network of relationships among subunits and systems. This creative growth-producing community ought to be characterized by equity, free exchange of ideas and the full inclusion of the actors, in our care, in the educational system in both the definition and process of its growth. The fundamental problem stems from cultural impairments of the relationships inherent in most educational communities. They are often characterized by an absence of genuine equality in the interactions as well as undefined methods for the resolution of common concerns and problems. The presence of inequalities and the failure of existing interactions to both define the problem and to specify resolutions is one root determinant of the educational community.

The problem is rendered even more difficult by the degree of isolation which exist between schools and the communities they serve and is further complicated by their differing and conflicting views toward education. These differences often make for two distinct subcultures, each having its own set of educational values and expectations, despite an apparent and common desire of wanting children to "succeed in school."

The essence of the problem is not the degree of difference between the subcultures, but the failure to define the differences and work towards a synthesis in the interest of the child. The essential problem is further complicated by the domination of one sub-group over the other, resulting in alienation from participating in the legitimate activity of creative

educational growth.

B. Major Principles

There are four central principles which guide the model:

1. The subcultural groups within the educational community must understand the role of culture in mediating educational outcomes, specifically the role of history, values, and expectations as they effect child development.
2. The growth and development of the child depends on consistency in educational strategies in the two primary subsystems in which he/she is socialized (home, school) and, therefore, on successful definition and resolution of conflicts, differences in educational expectations and outcomes in these subsystems.
3. The successful resolution of conflicts depends on the primary inclusion (that is the full and equal participation) of the subcultural groups in the education-community in the child's education.
4. The degree of success in the resolution of conflicts depends on the clear specification of the methods for problem definition, problem solving strategies, methods of implementation and feedback at each stage of development.

C. Major Concepts

Preamble:

The key issues for the model are directly related to developing the context, the content, and the nature of the interaction that would facilitate the optimum educational growth and development of the child. The exclusion of parents and community persons from the problem solving process, the apparent

domination of teachers and administrators on educational strategies, both directly have bearing on educational outcomes for the child. For example, a child's anger and frustation over not succeeding in school, more than often, extends outsides the confines of the school to the surrounding community, because the problem is not handled or resolved within the school-community setting.

The Fanon Center Model is designed to provide a framework in which to facilitate the development and maintenance of a school-community based system that stimulates and enhances problem solving by engaging all or a majority in the child's education. A major element, therefore, is the inclusion of parents, teachers, school administrators and any other significant persons in the child's life in the problem-solving process. Thus, the implementation of the model addresses and attempts to resolve the social and cultural discontinuities that exist between the environment in which the child is socialized and the setting in which he receives his formal education. There are three major concepts which express the model's central goals and emphasis.

The first concept community-based refers to the education-community specified in terms of its unique realities, i.e., a) those subsystems which control the power resources of the community (administrative elements),b) those subsystems that control information and technical skills (pedagogical elements), and c) those subsystems which control the cultural information and values specific to the child (family elements). This means that the directing of schools based in the community requires a special awareness and sensitivity to the subcultural elements and their possible conflicting expectations. Undesirable outcomes which occur as a result of a clash between subcultures, must be addressed with community-based solutions.

The second concept problem-solving implies a process consisting of a central structure and a specific set of relations. It is the process of mutual interaction between school and community to define central problems and needs; prioritizing of needs; developing strategies for solution; locating resources; implementing solutions; evaluating outcomes; giving feedback, and when necessary, specifying new needs. The process is continuous over time as problems occur and involves authentic and honest interaction between parents and staff.

The third concept, primary inclusion, operationally defined in full is full acknowledgement, participation and mutual interaction of the subcultures in the exploration, definition and solution of problems. Every subcultural or subsystem element must be acknowledged, accepted and be allowed equity in the expression of ideas, solutions and implementation of strategies.

D. Methodology

Design

The design called for the transmission of information largely through the group process and was exclusively school-based. The program is designed to facilitate the child through the adult, rather than through working directly with the child.

The specific program was designed to bring the selected educational communities the philosophy, principles and methods for problem solving, focusing on the socio-cultural realities of schools in the inner city. The design called for the use of expert consultants in first, facilitating the identification and sensitizing of subcultural groups with the school-community to the principles; secondly, the facilitation of the meeting of these groups for on going action meetings; thirdly, the instruction to these

groups in the explications of the model; and fourthly, the continued participation as a resource and catalyst to the school-community in problem-solving strategies, reporting, independent arbitration and feedback.

Process:

The strategy of the Fanon Center Model was to develop a framework in which to define a process that will 1) foster a critical consciousness of the social/cultural contents of the environment of the school and surrounding community, 2) develop methods of examining and expanding individual and institutional roles and responsibilities in educating the child,3) develop a cohesive unit which facilitates the interaction of people around educational issues rather than professional or self-interest, 4) develop resources to continue the task in the absence of the external consultants that the project brought.

An essential element of this strategy is the development and encouragement of authentic dialogue and behavior between all individuals with an interest in the child's education. It is through this action that all those concerned become aware of the psycho-social cultural values and beliefs of each environment. Once the incongruence of roles, values and expectations are realized, the problem solving process becomes less complicated and participants develop strategies and devise solutions which mobilize and take advantage of the total school-community resources. Groups or individuals may then come together to 1) locate the needed resources within the school or community 2) assist these resources in role definition and role expansion so that values, expectations and beliefs coincide with the values, expectations, and beliefs of the child's culture and his needs in the future, and 3) provide training for these resources so that they can either meet for the purpose of assessing the expertise needed to aid the child or deliver the expertise themselves.

The strategy and goals of the model suggest a particular type of methodological approach. Participants are grouped into three committees, initially along dimensions of professional self interest--administrative, teachers, parents and then redefined by general agreement along the dimensions of (1) power (administrative, i.e., consisting of those in the community who had control functions, eg. the school doctor, the local priest, the principal, Parent Advisory Council, (2) skills and knowledge (pedagogical), i.e., those in the community who had expertise specific to teaching the child, (3) cultural information (family life style), i.e., those in the community who were familiar with the cultural meanings of the various subcultures. These committees interact and engage in a process of assessing and prioritizing school-community needs and problems; analyzing current and alternative strategies; identifying resources required to implement a strategy; transferring responsibility for facilitating the development of problem solving strategies to persons within school; and finally, operationalizing problem solving strategies. Feedback sessions follow each stage and are designed to analyze and consolidate information from committees. Training workshops for each committee are utilized to clarify and enhance all attitudes and skills in educating the child.

It is our theory that by implementing this process and bringing these diverse and sometimes conflicting groups within the school-community together that a cohesive working unit can be formed for the purpose of resolving those educational problems affecting the child's growth and development.

II. PHASE I July, 1974- December, 1975

A. Project Goals

During the initial stages of the project, four major goals were established which would reflect the overall principles of the model. Working with key persons in each school site, the following goals were formulated to:

1. Provide training to parents, teachers and administrators which facilitate attitudinal and behavioral changes that will result in the development of new skills, teaching techniques, administrative procedures and strategies for educating the urban child of the 70's.
2. Build and create an atmosphere within the education delivery system which provides maximum support to the child and his family's educational needs.
3. Build a vehicle within the school's organizational structure which facilitates the ongoing process of identifying, analyzing, developing, implementing and evaluating problem-solving strategies.
4. Develop a means within the schools organizational structure which improves and facilitates ongoing interaction and exchange of resources between those external and internal to the school system, who are concerned and provide services which enhance the intellectual, physical, psychological and social development of the child.

B. Project Objectives

During Phase I, some initial objectives which were perceived as key in both operationalizing and accomplishing the projects goals were also developed. These objectives and subsequent activities represented the project's strategy of assisting all participants to understand and begin to resolve specific issues which affected urban education. It was our belief that workshops, as a mode for addressing these issues, would be the most effective because they

(1) allow maximum participation, (2) encourage participants to share knowledge, (3) facilitate meaningful communication/interaction vis-a vis-all subsystems within the schools, (4) aid the establishment of a consensus of school related problems, and (5) aid the formation of a cohesive unit among the varying school's subsystems working to resolve local school problems.

The following table shows the scope and length of work associated with the attainment of the project's organizational and programmatic goals.

OBJECTIVE	METHODS
1. Formation of Board of Directors	Selected from various community support groups and the target public schools.
2. Selection of Project Director	Board of Directors interviewed and approved final selection of project director.
Selection of Project Staff	Project Director solicited, interviewed and selected project staff.
3. Staff Development to include orientation and training	Small workshops conducted using resource persons with expertise in child development, school policies, small group work and problem solving.
4. Primary Contacts: Staff/School/Community	Meetings which explained and established program objectives
5. Group Identification: Definition of sub-groups within the school and community which influence growth of the child	Conducted small group sessions with administrators, teachers and parents to outline and define the sub-groups present in each target school community.
6. Role-Examination: The examination of the school as a social system and a) the existing and b) the expanded roles administrators, teachers and parents have in that system	Conducted group sessions to facilitate group definition of roles and objectives which affected the intellectual growth of the child.
7. Decision Making in the Interest of the Child	Mixed group workshop established to examine the methods and strategies used in problem solving.

8. Expanded Role Definition in the Interest of Problem Solving	Workshops on the parameters of new roles for parents, teachers in a modern school.
9. General Training: Phase I Workshop for administrators, teachers and parents in school based problem solving mode	Small workshops for teachers, parents and administrators focused on expanded development and role in problem solving.
10. Specific Skills Training: Phase II Skills Development Specific to Each Role to Include: - Administering human systems - Psychological principle useful to teachers and parents - Psychosocial information to parents - Need assessment	Small group workshop developed to meet the needs of administrators, teachers and parents. Resources from other social systems identified to meet some of these needs.
11. Improve Problem Solving Strategy of the School	Based on previous workshops. Small mixed group problem solving initiated on an identified problem.
12. Development of Teacher-Parent Manual on Useful Primary Data	Manuals developed from workshop materials, inquiries and informational needs expressed by both groups.
13. Evaluation to Determine: - Implementation and utility of problem solving strategies; - Attitude change, level of staff and parent - Changes in direction	A variety of evaluation techniques: Pre and Post Testing; Observations; Frequency of Contacts; Participant Reports

The first eleven (11) objectives were fully completed during the first phase. Objectives 12 and 13 were completed in phase II. A summary of the activities and interaction these objectives encouraged follows.

C. Organizational Objective:

A permanent Board of Directors was established from a group of individuals and agency representatives who had been instrumental in the planning and development of the project proposal and previous activities initiated at the two school sites. Representation on the Board was expanded to include two teachers (one from each school) and three parents at large. The

parents -at- large who were selected were those who had wide experience working with and providing in service training for other parents in the Los Angeles City Schools. The total composition of the Board of Directors bought together for the first time ir this context a wide spectrum of resources for the total development of the child. Its capability as a mobolizer was probably its greatest asset..

The Board of Directors also assumed responsibility for selecting the Project Director.

Six parent consultants were selected for the two target school communities (three each) with one consultant selected at large. A committee composed of members of the target schools' administration and parent advisory council and teaching staff was given the task of selecting the three parent consultants working from each school site. The (seventh) consultant at large was selected by the Board of Directors.

Because of the critical role which parent consultants would play in the project, a comprehensive staff training program was developed. It was conceived on the broadest number of issues which the parent consultant might be expected to address in contacts made with other parents, teachers, etc, either during home visitations or workshop consultation sessions. Additionally, it was necessary that we developed a staff development program to prepare a staff which would have realistic goals and expectations. This was most important since it would be through this staff that the educational goals and expectations of the target school communities would be identified and developed. Topics covered included some of the following general areas: (1) Small group methods and strategies, (2) Why children succeed, (3) Why children fail, (4) Understanding the problems confronting the urban school, (5) New and more fulfilling roles of parents in the schools. The project

utilized a number of internal and external resource persons to carry out this extensive program. Because the majority of these training sessions were provided by volunteer consultants, the project was able to meet its objectives without making heavy demands on its fairly small consultant/ professional expert budget.

D. Programmatic Objectives:

During the first six weeks of the project, while the staff was in training, frequent sessions were held on each school site and parent workshops were arranged by the Principle Investigator to explain the nature of the program and to establish realistic hopes and expectations. This was also added opportunity for the school administrators, teachers and parents to ask questions and to share ideas and make a direct input to the program.

It was during this period that the various sub-groupings were identified and organized. Great attention was given to the school based realities of organization and control, both from within and without. After several sessions, it was decided because of the prevailing idiosyncrasies of the two schools' organizational patterns, it would be best to begin with group sessions which only involved the major sub-groups clearly visible and operating in the schools. These sub-groups where identified as: 1) the administrative (principal, vice-principal, program coordinator, school nurse, guidance counselor, pupil service and attendance worker and resource teacher); 2) The teacher, teacher-aides, classroom instructors and paraprofessionals; and 3) Parent and community. It was believed that sub-groupings could and might best be illuminated more accurately as the project progressed.

Initial workshops focused on clarifying and developing a working knowledge of the accepted roles and responsiblities of each sub-group within the target schools. Some tensions were encountered, because for many individuals this

was probably the first time they had been asked to define their roles in the school or roles in educating the child. Many individuals, however, were still ill at ease and defensive in discussing their roles. They tended to verbalize statements which were a facsimile of a directive from the Board of Education, or more socially acceptable responses. Discussions on role definition/ expansion attempted to focus on three key issues: 1) The function of individual roles in decision making and problem solving, 2) The skills and information concommitant with effective functioning within roles, and 3) The process of role implementation. Each participant was, henceforth, able to critically look at his or her role in the educational process and to set realistic parameters within which to function.

The role definition process was completed in four weeks and was followed by general and specific training sessions.

E. General and Specific Training

These sessions were intended to assist participants in developing new skills, attitudes and informational resources critical to the three subgroups functioning effectively in their defined roles within the educational process. Groups were, therefore, formed according to the participants function in the school-community.

Administrative Group

These sessions focused on the humanistic development of the school as a social system with primary focus being placed on the child. Realizing the difficulties which this group had with role definition and role expansion, we approached these sessions asking participants to view the development of the school from the standpoint of the child's needs. The objective of the groups was to define those needs and to evaluate the system. In addition, the groups were asked to try to decipher how, by whom, and where within the system the

needs of the child were met.

Because of the previously alluded to idiosyncrasies of the two sites, there were slight variations in process. The principal differences were found in the nature of the leadership affecting openess, regularity and materials covered during the sessions. There was less intimidation in one school.

The sessions proved to be most beneficial and served their modified purpose. They provided the participants with a clearer picture of existing personal attitudes and perceptions of roles and students and strengths and weakness in their approaches to meeting the specific needs of students of the two schools. Also, the sessions provided additional information which was used to further develop subsequent session plans for Phase I.

This was accomplished in four sessions on each school site.

Teacher and Teacher-Aide Group

These workshops/sessions followed closely the format previously discussed regarding the administrative group. Participants, however, were more frequently provided with feedback from the administrative and parent groups. This feedback, when interjected, served as a starting point for stimulating discussion(s) on defining action roles and perceived legitimate functions of the system.

Subsequently, participants were involved in developing training sessions which they felt would be beneficial and which would address the day-to-day problems they confront in the classroom. These sessions served to help teaching staff become more stabilized and task focused. They generally found the sessions useful, but were inclined to feel that definitive problem solving could only take place in the presence of responsible parents. Initially, however, these groups were not brought together because we

wanted this initiative to emerge out of both parent and teacher groups. This eventually happened after the eight session.

Parent Groups

Parent participants were identified and informed by parent consultants via home visitation, interview method, telephone contacts, open questionnaires, and ore mass meeting. The effectiveness of the various approaches differed between the two sites. Largely, this was a function of methods used on a sum total of four hundred families who were contacted by parent consultants during the early stages of this period.

Parent workshops covered a variety of topics. An emphasis was placed on definition of parenting, providing information which increased the participants awareness of child development, school and (school)participation, and some of the inherent problems associated with meeting the family's educational needs in an urban setting. The primary objective of such an all encompassing program was to show the interrelatedness of parenting functions and the support which the schools could provide.

Due to the large number of parents contacted, several series of workshops were held to accommodate all individuals who wished to attend. There was a distinct difference in the level of attendance of parent sessions on each site. This was a function of the differing states of administrative leadership at both sites. There was more encouragement by the administration of parents at one of the sites and this increased the attendance.

Overall, the sessions were very productive at both schools providing us with invaluable information via group discussions and individual feedback. The sessions also provided the last inputs necessary to develop a total picture of the school's social structure and role as a provider of educational services.

Mixed Groups

At the onset of the eighth month of the project year, a new group was developed and composed of the members from all of the previous groups. The purpose of this mixed group was to initiate the problem-solving process and to provide the school with a vehicle in which there would be collaboration between school administration, teaching staff and parents regarding educational problems. The first of these mixed group sessions were polite stand-off with nothing said by anyone which would reveal their particular misgivings, feelings of anger, fear, or negative expectations. Gradually the participants were able to work out through group discussions their lack of trust and openly express feelings and criticisms.

In addition, to sorting out these intergroup problems and differences, the mixed group discussions conducted a needs assessment and identified a variety of school problems. The concensus was that the following posed specific problems to the quality of education in the two schools:

1) The low level of parental involvement
2) School discipline, i.e., the need for and causes of discipline problems, poor or inadequate discipline methods and techniques.
3) The lack of an educational needs assessment process
4) The absence of an evaluation process
5) School attendance
6) Student motivation
7) Class size
8) Communication
9) Sharing skills and resources
10) Student health

These problems were discussed briefly and were assessed and prioritized. A more in-depth analysis and consideration of these problems took place during Phase II. In addition, efforts were begun to assist each site in developing those vehicles and approaches needed to resolve these problems.

III. PHASE II - January, 1977 - June, 1977

A. Preamble:

At the onset of Phase II, a few changes were made within the model which reflected a critical analysis and re-evaluation of the events of Phase I. We discovered that we did not have a ready and eager group of participants interested in the development of problem-solving strategies, despite participants being involved in various aspects of the initial program planning. During Phase I many individuals were hesitant and openly suspicious of the motives and change which the model might create. In addition, there were constraints posed for the model which we had not accounted for in designing the model. However, given the flexibility of the model, changes were made which would prevent the development of a climate in which individuals and groups would be allowed to become so ensnarled and ruled by their own suspicions and inertia that their abilities to resolve problems and function effectively would be drastically reduced. Phase II, therefore, was a critical point in the advancement of the model, because it highlighted the viability of the model and revealed the constraints which any model must contend with when diverse groups of a school-community are brought together to effect a synthesis of their various interests in the definition and resolution of educational needs and problems.

B. Objectives

Phase II objectives sought to extend the efforts of Phase I by:

1. Bringing together legitimate, community-school persons, ie., the mutual inclusion of community and school persons, to design, implement and assess the effectiveness of administrative strategies which would enhance the delivery

and nurturing of a creative growth producing environment. Specifically:

a. convening a group of persons (representing principals, grade level teachers, parents, health and social services) to examine continuously with an aim of improving by problem-solving the administrative strategies of the school with respect to all school programs, school functioning and child development. This group was designated the administrative committee.

b. helping define and assist the committees to address needs.

c. assisting the groups in implementing and assessing the effectiveness of short and long-term problem solutions.

2. Bringing together legitimate community-school persons to examine, design and implement pedagogical forms which would improve creative learning and teaching in the classroom or at home. Specifically:

a. convening an activity group consisting of persons selected on the basis of their knowledge to examine with the aim of improving specific academic programs, curriculum, external curricular acitvity, teaching and learning styles and methods and special issues in education affecting the school population. This group was called the pedagogical committee forum.

b. working with the defined groups as they work at problem solutions that are manageable and realistic.

c. working with groups to implement and assess the effect-

iveness of the problem solutions.

3. Convening a group of persons with a knowledge of the families' lifestyles (representing principals, parent advisory council, health and social services, teachers, community and parents) to examine the role of the family in defining the educational styles of their c hild's education and development, with a view of improving the match and reducing the mis-match of expectations and values of the family and school. This group was called the family lifestyle committee. Specifically:

   a. defining and prioritizing needs which would aid in developing realistic strategies toward problem solutions.

4. Bringing new information to bear upon the problem-solving process in all groups via training conferences, publications, and feedback techniques.

To meet these objectives and address the issues rising out of Phase I, the structure of the model, as has been noted, was slightly changed. The mixed group which had been functioning at the close of Phase I was divided into three smaller groups in order to narrow the focus of their discussions and tasks. In addition, a training process was devised which would assist participants in developing:

a) a broader understanding of the nature of the problems;

b) knowledge of the various alternatives available to resolve the problem; and

c) the skills required to resolve the problem.

C. Structural Modification

The rationale for the structural modification was to integrate participants conceptually on the basis of power or knowledge rather than on professional or individual interest and to further the development of cohesive units with a specific focus on the problem-solving processes.

The design below captured these new directions as well as concretized the parameters of the model. It formalized for the first time the conceptual focus of those structures which would work toward the resolution of problems. Mixed, problem-solving committees were, therefore, formed to discuss administrative strategies, pedagogical forms, and family life-styles. Each of these areas was approached through a specific series of activities: needs assessment, training, problem-solving and integration and reassessment.

CONCEPTUAL AREA FOCUS

Stages of Activity:	Adminstrative Strategy	Pedagogical Form	Family Life Styles
Need Assessment			
Training			
Problem Solving			
Integration & Reassessmnet			

FIGURE 1: Design and Direction of Phase II Activity

D. Modification in the Design

Each committee made an assessment of the needs identified in Phase I and prioritized those which fell within their area of focus. Each issue of concern was then examined to determine what additional information and/or resources were required for their just resolution. In those instances where there was an absence of information and resources, special training sessions were organized for the purpose of acquiring additional information and alternative approaches which might resolve the problem. These sessions served a dual purpose in that they were both informative and task oriented.

Upon completion of the training activities the committees reconvened to begin the problem-solving process. Their strategies, resolutions and actions were informed by discussions in the special training sessions as well as represented a synthesis of the various realities and special sensitivities of the sub-cultural elements of the school-community.

The final actions of the committees were integrated into the daily routine of the school and reassessed for their effectiveness in alleviating the previous problems incurred.

The success of the above process was that it provided each participant with a critical awareness of the problems and the psycho-social variables affecting the child's education; improved problem-solving skills, and methods for establishing realistic task and change-oriented goals which more efficiently would serve to improve the child's educational opportunities. Additionally, for the first time in the target school and community, training was provided which addressed the real and practical issues of educating a child. Topics included parenting styles, child growth and development, learning disabilities, health and hygiene, motor coordination, hyperactivity-shyness, techniques of classroom management, perception of

the Black child, multi-cultural education, the politics of education and the competencies of the Black Child. In many instances, there was effective problem-solving at the classroom or family level.

Midway into the process of developing strategies and committee activity assignments, an issue surfaced which began to impinge upon two of the efforts of the administrative and pedagogical committees. This impingement was created by the federal order for the immediate integration of school staffs throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District.

This order posed particular problems for the administrative and pedagogical committee because it demanded the immediate attention of most of their members. It had the affect of re-establishing professional or self-interest issues at the focal point of group discussion, thus defined priority issues became secondary issues. It also had the effect of divesting committee energies and creating group apathy. The previous sense of security stability which had aided these committee's progress was upset. A pervasive attitude and typical response to the resolution of other problems became "what's the use?"

The pace of the administrative and pedagogical committee activities came to a gradual halt. The committees' roles and functions as the initiators of the problem-solving process became more difficult since many of the individuals whom they would work with were scheduled to be transferred and felt their participation in any further activities was senseless and would not provide any personal benefits.

The project staff had to exercise caution in trying to sustain movement. The wisdom of taking this action can only be speculative. However, since both target schools lost roughly 50% of their staff, perhaps, the most experienced and innovative, the decision may have been a wise one.

(One school lost ten permanent teachers while another lost sixteen permanent teachers and the school principal).

The project staff was most concerned about developing problem-solving strategies and vehicles for a sizeable portion of the school staff who would be arriving in the school for the first time in September.

Although, we regreted losing participants, who for the past two years had provided information and training intended to develop that special awareness and sensitivity to the needs of the child, his family and the development of community-school based solutions to problems, all was not lost. The project staff gained immeasurable knowledge regarding its re-education efforts which it could utilize and foster the development of the same qualities within the new staff.

Yet, many of the confounding constraints revealed in the social reality of the school-community did influence implementing problem-solving strategies in the school. The degree to which many problems were resolved depended greatly upon the amount of risks the individual (s) involved was willing to take. Time and time again, this was verified in the distinct differences between avowals and actions made by administrative staff in particular. Individuals continously both privately and within group settings professed ideals but would ignore practice. Despite the efficacy of the model in revealing these differences, the proclivity toward compartmentalizing individual beliefs, expressing values to fit the occassion or group often nullified or confounded the return realized from genuine group efforts. This problem reflected those social forces which were an integral part of the human reality of schools and in many respects our larger society. Those larger and more identifiable social problems which we encountered can be characterized as a) organizational, b) socio-cultural, and c) political.

E. Problems Encountered

Organizational Forces:

Those organizational forces encountered and which exert an influence on the development of problem-solving in the target schools were usually related to 1) structure, and 2) procedures. Organizationally, as in most schools, the target schools were hierchical in structure. Communication was related and decisions made from the top down. Very seldom was any action initiated or made without prior approval from those in authority. This applied both to school employees and community residents. Where this was not the case, decision making was limited and restricted to a small group of individuals. A fairly elaborate, if not always cohesive, patronage system was operating within both target schools.

This patronage system included parents, teachers, and lower administration supervisors. Membership in this invisible organization was gained either through direct recruitment, doing favors or by taking the responsibility for jobs or functions which no one else wanted to fulfill. Other individuals not belonging to this system fell in one of two other groups, associate members and outsiders. Associate members often sought the friendship, did favors, asked advice and ate lunch with the "insiders." Many within this group had aspirations of also becoming an "insider." Outsiders were usually those individuals who had enraged one or more of the "insiders." This individual was often too independent and did not always conform to the educational philosophy, rules and values prescribed by the "insiders." Outsiders, as a consequence, were either engaged in direct conflict with others in the school or became submissive and interested only in performing their job related responsibilities. Because hierchical organizational

patterns permited such a small network of relationships based on dependency to exist, problem-solving and decision making capacities suffered in these schools.

There are more specific examples of how organizational patterns adversely affected the problem-solving process. In a series of problem-solving sessions, communication was identified as a major issue confronting one school. However, while these deliberations were taking place, the school principal was not in attendance. During successive meetings a consultant was requested by the group to facilitate an analysis of the problem and to assist the group in formulating strategies which would eliminate it. One week later, the principal, now in attendance and hearing the minutes from the previous meeting, challenged the group's assertions of a communications problem. The principal asserted that if anyone present had stated that the problem existed, they were mistaken. The principal added, that attempts to formulate any strategies for future guidance in this area were not needed. Following this statement, the entire group, ironically, sought the opportunity to verbally affirm the principal's position and to avoid further discussion of the communication issue. This sudden turn in events was to the dismay of the consultant who had facilitated the previous sessions. The consultant handled the situation well and simply restated his understanding of events from the previous sessions and presented the group with several strategies which could be used if a communication problem arose in the future.

In another situation, one of the pedagogical groups met over a five week period prioritizing needs from their needs assessment survey. Several priority items were selected for immediate attention and a copy of the groups findings were passed on to the school administrator. The school

administrator was asked to respond to several of the issues and to meet later with the group to discuss alternative solutions. This meeting was deemed necessary by members of the pedagogical group because of the role the school administrator could play in facilitating a speedy resolution of the issues identified. The principal subsequently informed the group facilitator in private that group had gone too far in its deliberations. It was the feeling of the administrator, that no action was required and that the group's findings would be accepted and filed for future reference. Shortly, thereafter, the facilitator informed the group of her meeting with the school administrator, the group expressed their disillusionment and negative sentiments regarding future problem-solving efforts. As a result, the group adopted a more cautious approach in defining issues and formulating strategies.

In both situations even though "insiders" participated, it was apparent that the hierchical position of the school administrator had an undue influence in determining how problems were identified and which ones were to be resolved. However, in one instance, the school administrator, decided to utilize some of the suggestions made by the communications consultant, but quite defensively distributed printed materials describing the duties and responsibilities of all staff members. In his second and final communication with the entire school-community, this administrator reinterated the principal's authority. The administrator stated:

> Under California law, the principal is charged with the final responsibility for pupil behavior and, therefore, retains final authority in the resolution of pupil behavioral problems and all other school related concerns. (sic) Inevitably, when broader interpretations of individual authority abound within the schools, this tends to discourage and prevent the resolution of problem independent of the school principal or others who operate under his aegis.

Socio-Cultural Forces:

No one can afford overlooking and ignoring the influences of the socio-cultural charateristics of a school and it's cummunity. Both of the target schools were in predominantely Black low-income communities in South-Central Los Angeles. Most of the children of the two schools came from families which received their only income from the Aid for Dependent Children Funds; therefore, both schools received federal Title I Funds. The fact that these communities were Black and poor had, in the final analysis, a definite effect on efforts to develop problem-solving strategies.

As stated earlier, the strategy was to bring together the diverse groups within the school's social context in order to forge a cohesive unit committed to serve in the interest of the child rather than for professional or individual interest. We believed then and now the strategy is a good one. However, questions did arise as to how much training could be provided; whether sufficient opportunities were provided to make participants conscious of their individual behaviors, biases, values and the concommitant influences which these behaviors, and views had upon effective problem-solving.

The cohesive working relationships we sought continuously escaped us. The lack of cohesion was not so much the result of racial bias and discrimination as it was a preoccupation with elitist or class attitudes. The predominance of elitist attitudes was often played down, but time and again they were quite noticeable in the interpersonal interactions which took place in meetings, workshops, group sessions, conferences and even private conversations, This was quite obvious during some of our initial meetings with schools. Many of the so-called "professional educators" felt they

did not have any problems to resolve, and they often felt that parents should and could not resolve problems effecting the school. On one occasion several educators made the following statements:

Educator #1:

> Why are you planning to bring other people anyway? You need to keep some people out. I feel that a school is a business, and I feel we have been trained to run the business. People who are not trained to run a business should not try to run it. Unless they have been invited. Nobody comes into my room... there are too many people already walking the halls. Get them out.

Another stated:

> You said you were going to offer all these things to us as teachers. This is great, but how much are you going to offer the parents in the community. This is what I want to know, because they are the ones who need to become more aware of the health problems of their children. You tell them that their children can't see and they tell you that they have had the child five years and to their knowledge he doesn't have a problem..

The last one stated:

> ...if we really feel we lack the knowledge, we can go and pick up a course, okay. But the parent can't do this. I think that a lot of emphasis needs to be given or shared with them.... You are going to give us help with solving emotional problems, but the parents are the ones who need the help. The child is theirs, and we still have more resources. They have no one to help them handle their child.... that's why we have to undo what has been done in 6 years?

Comments similar to these were reiterated throughout the three years in one setting or another. Parents and other community persons openly expressed deep feelings of displeasure about working with individuals or a school which responded to them in a condescending manner.

These elitist and social class attitudes were also observed during other activities in and around the school. For example, during the lunch periods, the class divisions in the schools became more visible. Black teachers were seated at one table, white teachers at another, teacher aides at yet another table, and finally parents, seated at still another. Children were not allowed to enter except to locate a teacher/adult or to

pick up box lunches for a class field trip. These social class patterns were impossible to break and only served to perpetuate some of the lack of respect, distrust and conflicts existing between the groups.

The cultural discontinuity observed and ever present in the schools could be said to be a by-product of the preceeding class divisions. We say this because the schools whole-heartedly pay lip-service and espouse that these children and their respective communities are different--they are culturally disadvantaged or deprived. This, however, might have been also based purely on economics, since both schools received additional state and federal funds for students so identified.

Not only these children but, children in similar situations, are summarily viewed as being culturally and intellectually incompetent. This is a theme that most of the specially funded school programs expouse. The attitude of most of the teachers at these schools is that the children of these communities come to school with few if any skills. They (the teachers) believe they must undo what the child has learned at home or child will suffer in the future. Most attempts on the part of the child to assert himself and make the teacher aware of his competence is categorized as speaking out of turn, demanding too much attention or exercising deviant behavior. The child's meanings and renderings of the world which he acquires from his environment are ignored at all <u>cost</u> and <u>never utilized</u>. The child is therefore fully unable to participate in his own learning.

These types of distorted impressions and negative beliefs regarding the Black child became clearly evident during several workshops and interviews with key individuals, particularly, guidance counselors. During one workshop, the facilitator asked the participants to describe the qualities/attitudes of one child known to all of them whom was disadvantaged. After

they described the child to the facilitator, it was brought out that only negative comments were mentioned. The facilitator then asked if they could say something positive about the child. As these same individuals began to describe the child's positive qualities and attributes, they verbalized characteristics which only earlier were perceived as negative.

This kind of negativism as it relates to the Black child tended to be widespread throughout the schools. Often the school guidance counselor was asked to verify the negative impressions of the teacher. One guidance counselor who was interviewed explained that her primary responsiblity was testing those youngsters who were referred to her by classroom teachers. She stated that many of the kids she saw did not have some of the problems which the teacher suspected. She believed that most of the children had the potential to do classwork, but for some reason they could not perform certain tasks. Many teachers appeared to be unable to develop or initiate a range of exercises in the classroom to meet the special needs of these children. Because a child lacked certain skills, many teachers thought only of having the child removed from the classroom and placed in special classes for learning problems. The later practice was a point of contention in a recent California court case, Larry P. vs. Wilson Riles. It was shown that a disproportionate number of Black and Brown children were tested and classified as educably mentally retarded (EMR)

It has been our observations that many teachers, white and black, use this negative approach in dealing with Black children. Furthermore, it is our analysis that this practice of inappropriate labelling is an outgrowth of a staff's inability and sometimes unwillingness to adequately understand and utilize the belief system and cultural reality of the child. Therefore, when teachers are unsuccesful in imposing the school's cultural reality

and beliefs system upon the child, the child is blamed and labelled incompetent or a behavioral problem.

In summary, because of the prevasiveness of these attitudes within the school system, problem-solving in the interest of the child either is none existent or represents a distorted point of view. Many educators begin to believe that they know what's best for the child and, therefore, only they have the right to educate these children. The end result is that the valuable skills and resources present and found in the child's culture, his parents and community are consistently overlooked, dismissed or felt inappropriate for the resolution of school problems. School based problem-solving, therefore, becomes restricted to those capabilities present in the school environment rather than in the total school-community.

Political Forces

The existence of certain power relationships had an influence on the development of school-based problem solving strategies in the two schools. Who or what group had the power to determine when and how school related problems were resolved became a very political question in the target schools. Individuals and groups openly vied for control and authority. As a result, each contending group of parents, teachers and administrators were pitted against one another. An individual would only have to be on or around the school sites a short time before feeling, observing or being informed of the political tensions. The conflicts which we observed and were confronted with most were a) parent-parent politics, b) parent-teacher politics, and c) parent-administrator politics.

Parents-Parent Politics

Political conflict occured among parents of the parent advisory council (PAC) or between members of the PAC and the Parents Teacher Association

(PTA). These conflicts emanated from political loyalties that had formed based on allegiance to the "system" or school administrators interests rather than to the community's interests. In both schools, certain individuals or one group was always regarded as pawns of the system. Whenever these individuals or groups were predisposed to come together to resolve a pressing issue, comments absolving those responsible for the problem or its resolution continually surfaced. Many problems remained unresolved because of the various allegiances. Simply, more time was spent arguing rather than resolving their common problems.

Because of the reocurrance of this problem in schools, individuals, parents or groups develop a certain distrust of school administrators and sometimes community members. After years of conflict with these individuals, sometimes as a result outside manipulation, many loose confidence in being able to either individually, or as a group, resolve the recurrent problems confronting their children. As a consequence, many times they lower their expectations and aspirations for their children and the school. A common comment made is "They are going to do what they want to do anyway; why should I worry." Many withdraw into silence.

Parent-Teacher Politics

Some say that a power vacuum now exists because of the increasing amount of bureaucracy in the education system. As a result, teachers, via unions, are seeking to fill this vacuum. The conflicts between parents and teachers is often perceived as a competition between the two groups to fill the vacuum. We are unprepared to make such a broad generalization but have observed the parent-teacher conflicts close up.

Very few discussions took place in both schools between parents and teachers without teachers ultimately seeking to assume total authority over

the nature and direction of discussion. In situations where they were unable to gain direct or indirect control of an activity from parents, they felt threatened and became self-defensive. In one school, the majority of teachers were openly opposed to the one individual as chairperson for the school advisory council. Many openly and secretively sought to replace this individual with someone more to their liking. In another instance at the same school, teachers made comments during discussions on how certain individuals or groups were possibly a threat to the peace and harmony of their respective schools. Some felt that the ideas put forth by parents were attempts to have the community control the schools. The fear of losing their power was overwhelming. These types of feelings and behavior alienated parents, disrupted efforts toward dialogue and co-operation and contributed to parents and teachers aligning themselves according to group interest.

Efforts to get the two groups together to deliberate were difficult and will probably continue to be so. Each group seemed unwilling or desirous of sharing power with one another. Although our strategies involved confronting this political reality head on, we still were uncertain about the chances of bringing the groups together without more extensive training related to this political reality.

Parent-Administrator Politics

An inner city school administrator once stated "The way to become a good administrator in the eyes of parents is to take few of them out to lunch or dinner." The political life of the school administrator is doing whatever is necessary to keep the lid from blowing off. As a result, administrators make avowals to parents to gain their support in order to keep the lid on. On some occasions, school administrators engage in open conflict with

parents to assert their authority over all matters related to the school. On other occasions, they secretly support one parent faction against another. Their politics often contributes to the confusion and conflict from which inner city schools suffer.

In both target schools, we found one or more of these situations present. In both schools everyone knew or felt certain parents were the principal's personal spys.

The school administrators in these schools maintained their power by keeping or making parents dependent on them to resolve problems which occurred. Very often, this was done by persuading parents that all problems must and should be resolved on an individual basis rather than as a group. Any efforts on the part of parents to address issues and problems collectively was perceived as a threat to the principal's authority. Another way in which the principals maintained power was by being selective about information that was shared or taking it upon themselves to resolve specific problems alone.

These contradictory postures often assumed by the school administrators posed special problems for building problem-solving strategies in the target schools. We found that these administrators possessed the potential to legitimate the problem-solving process, however, their need for control of the situation hindered prospects of gaining support from individuals to maintain problem solving activities. Gaining the support of the school administrators can be an initial asset but the political nature of their actions can create confusion and, therefore, become a liability.

IV. Critical Dimensions

Over the past three years an abundance of data, information, and experiences has been gained, which in turn, informed us of the nature and realities of urban schools. The thrust of the model provided the much needed focus to lay bare the sometimes startling realities, constraints, and contradictions present in the social reality of our educational system.

At the core of the problem was the ingrained cultural arrogance and inequitable social relationships perpetuated and made manifest in how the schools operated. Despite all the findings and the personal training and experience which participants shared, there was an inability to establish trusting, rewarding and equitable human relationships across ethnic, class, and age boundaries. Avowals of the value and need for just and meaningful human relationships were made but ignored in practice. Obviously, this meant when polarities were reconciled they were reconciled on particular issues/or for the moment. Preceptions of the existence of proprietory rights made individuals either defensive or unwilling to shoulder responsibilities.

These conflicting relationships served only the purpose of limiting problem-resolution and curtailed individual efforts to explore the realities of the school. These realities cannot be overcome in three years. The hidden value of a model built upon the Fanon Center concept is that it provides the context and focus to begin to confront the contradictions that exist in the social reality of the education system.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The capacity of urban schools to resolve recurrent education problems is critically related to their understanding of the socio-cultural discontinuity between a) the culture in which the child is socialized (parents, community), and b) the culture which the school projects (teachers). Our purpose is basing our model on the "cultural discontinuity" thesis grows out a deep concern regarding the failure of the present education system, in general, to adequately serve the needs of the Black community. The future demise of this community lies in the balance. Millions of federal dollars have been spent for the purpose of eliminating the educational problems suffered by this community and the poor, yet seemingly, to no avail. In most cases, the educational problems for which these monies have been designated are more complex and involve a variety of socio-economic issues of a more controversial nature, ie., social ideas, employment, unemployment, underemployment, etc.

We believe that it is the social responsibility of the school/educational system to go beyond the mere mastery of knowledge and the development of certain specific skills, to train and guide individuals in developing a consistent basis for action--problem-solving. The out cry for educational relevancy throughout American society attest to the increasing demand that our education system/schools exert a more consistent and prominent role in exploring and defining, in usable terms, the social priorities and reformulations necessary for meaningful growth and development. An increasing majority of American public is interested less in the memorization of ideas and methods, than in understanding the nature and reasons for life's problems and those actions which can affect their just resolution. The alternative, therefore, is for education to take a

a more agressive and intelligent approach in dealing with and investigating problems arising out of the human condition. If no other alternative is found, we will continue to find our educational theories unreal and sterile.

The search for a meaningful educational alternative is dependent on a critical understanding of the social reality of the individuals to be served. What that social reality happens to be is greatly influenced and can be described by culture. If education is not to be disconnected from life, it must begin with the culture of the people it is serving. This necessitates that efforts be made to study and understand the culture (both) of the child's environment as well as the educational values and expectations which the school projects. The value of such efforts will be the discovery of the incongruences which limit and prevent many from expanding their knowledge, and technical capacity to resolve the problems of everyday living.

The Fanon Center Model was, therefore, justified and represents an innovative yet pragmatic approach to resolving the recurrent problems affecting education. It recognizes that a portion of these problems are due to the social distance between the school and communities they serve. Diminishing this gap was necessary to establish intelligible and meaningful communication between the schools and their communities.

The importance of the cultural discontinuity theme forces each individual to examine their respective culture or subculture's value system and how certain biases, values and attitudes within these cultures affected the learning process. The following is a list of the patterns, attitudes or behaviors in the target schools which became apparent to participants:

1. The degree of social distance (nature of human relationships

and communication) between school staff, parents and community persons.

2. The lack of faith in themselves and distrust in others
3. The belief in their inability to resolve school-community problems
4. The lack of understanding their power of reflection; the importance of taking the risk of thinking and contributing to school-community problems.
5. The notion of limiting the task of education to a specialized few as opposed to all those who have some relationship to the process.
6. The failure to see the importance of involving the child in his own learning.

By focusing on cultural discontinuity the schools were asked to focus on three operating styles found within the social context of the school--the administrative, pedagogical and family life styles. Reconciliation of the discontinuity that existed between these styles enhanced opportunities to utilize the multiple resources present in the school communities.

In our analysis of the last three years, we must say some groups as expected have understood and are more sensitive to the issue of cultural discontinuity and its effects on school problems. Efforts to discuss and resolve school problems have had varying results. The mixed reactions, successes and failures must be viewed as products of the interplay between permanence and change and efforts to generate something new from the old. On the other hand, solving efforts often promoted significant change and in turn, evoke fears about the lose of individual or group status. There fears were and still are present in both schools.